

Six Thinking Hats

Each hat is a different "direction" to think, a different type of lateral thinking. Systematically encouraging these six directions when you are searching for creative solutions brings lateral thinking to the problem. When you are working on a problem, stop periodically and switch hats, come at the problem from a different direction of thinking.

White Hat Thinking covers facts, data, figures, information, and gaps.

Red Hat Thinking includes feelings, intuitions, and emotions. No "reasons" are needed to suggest a possibility.

Black Hat Thinking is the process of discernment, judgment, weighing and evaluating, must always be logical and is critical. Black Hat thinking is used to assess why a proposal won't work.

Yellow Hat Thinking is the positive side of the Black Hat. It must be logical, but looks for benefits and value.

Green Hat Thinking is the process of creativity, alternatives, possibilities, implications, the larger picture.

Blue Hat Thinking is the overview and process control aspect of problem solving, making sure the solutions fits, will work and how to make it work.

What color was Jean Genet's hat?

"The final straw came when little Jean, a ninth grader, was put in charge of the school's Christmas play. The work, loosely based on the Magi story, but now hinging on Genet's obsession with powerful thighs and buttocks of the Christ child, was filled with buggery, larceny, and prostitution of the basest kind. The audience, mostly parents, was utterly appalled, unaware that it

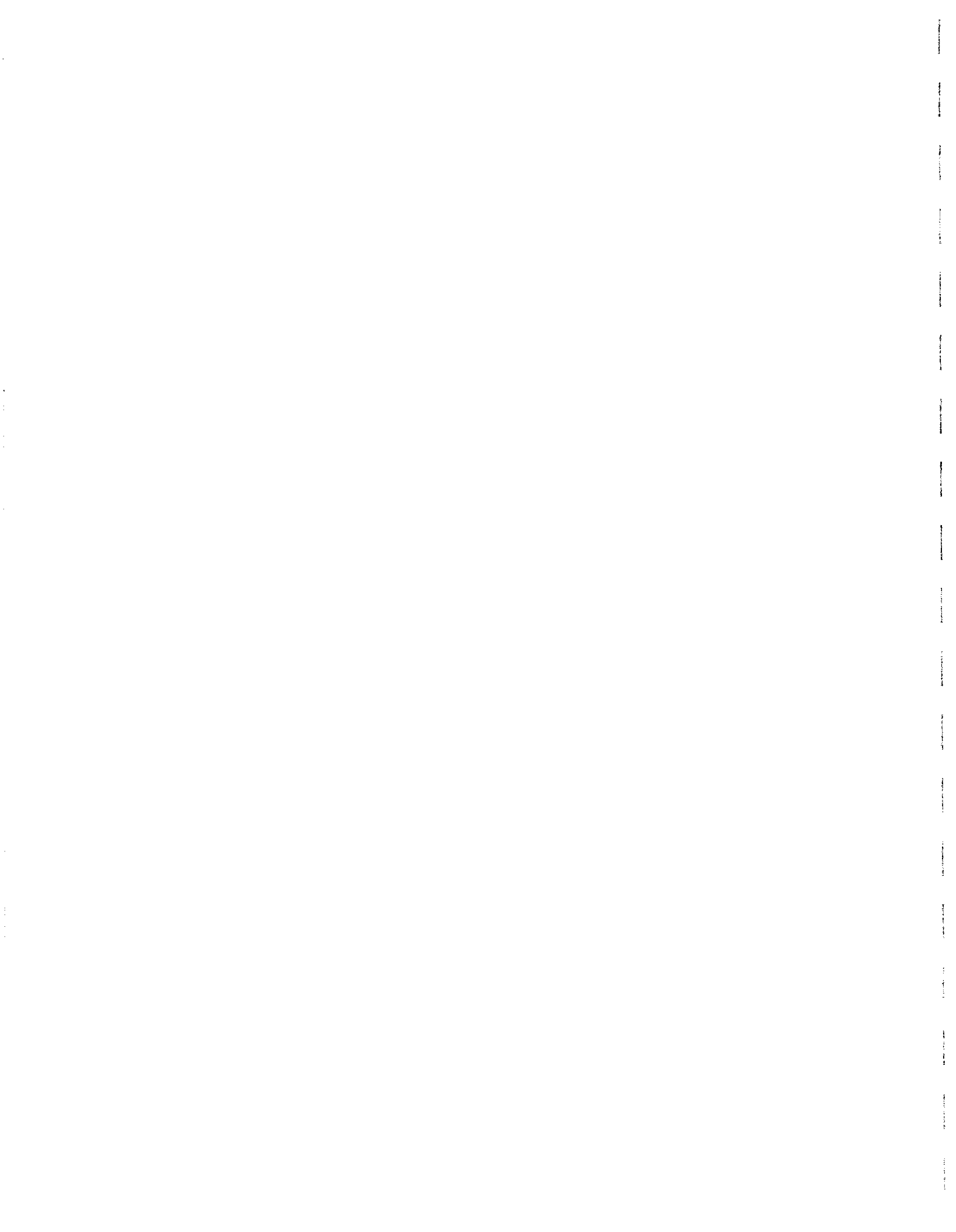
CREATIVITY HOME PAGE

was witnessing the first work of one of the 20th century's premier dramatists. The school paper was kinder: "M. Genet's *The Kings* is a challenging work that plunges the audience into a symbolic landscape of loneliness, scatology and erotic despair." The administration did not see it that way. Jean was sent to Mettray reform school less than twenty-four hours after the curtain came down." Marie Lanacaine, *Forever Genet*, Aureole and Co. Publishers, 1987, p.107

http://webits3.appstate.edu/apples/study/Creativity/new_page_10.htm 4/7/03

TASK CARD: Six Thinking Hats

Read the materials in this folder and discuss with the others in your expert group about this strategy. Use the graphic organizer to record your thoughts about the strengths of this strategy, possible applications of when it could be best used, and considerations for maximizing this strategy's use.





Six Thinking Hats

A summary by Sylvie Labelle

In the 1980s Dr. de Bono invented the Six Thinking Hats method. The method is a framework for thinking and can incorporate lateral thinking. Valuable judgmental thinking has its place in the system but is not allowed to dominate as in normal thinking. Dr. de Bono organized a network of authorized trainers to introduce the Six Thinking Hats. Advanced Practical Thinking (APTT), of Des Moines, Iowa USA, licenses the method in all parts of the world except Canada (and now, Europe). APTT organizes the trainers and supplies the only training materials written and authorized by Dr. de Bono.

Organizations such as Prudential Insurance, IBM, Federal Express, British Airways, Polaroid, Pepsico, DuPont, and Nippon Telephone and Telegraph, possibly the world's largest company, use Six Thinking Hats.

The six hats represent six modes of thinking and are directions to think rather than labels for thinking. That is, the hats are used proactively rather than reactively.

The method promotes fuller input from more people. In de Bono's words it "separates ego from performance". Everyone is able to contribute to the discussion without denting egos as they are just using the yellow hat or whatever hat. The six hats system encourages performance rather than go defense. People can contribute under any hat even though they initially support the opposite view.

The key point is that a hat is a direction to think rather than a label for thinking. The key theoretical reasons to use the Six Thinking Hats are to:

- encourage Parallel Thinking
- encourage full-spectrum thinking
- separate ego from performance

The published book Six Thinking Hats (de Bono, 1985) is readily available and explains the system, although there have been some additions and changes to the execution of the method.

The following is an excerpt from John Culvenor and Dennis Else Engineering Creative Design, 1995)

White Hat on the Hats

There are six metaphorical hats and the thinker can put on or take off one of these hats to indicate the type of thinking being used. This putting on and taking off is essential. The hats must never be used to categorize individuals, even though their behavior may seem to invite this. When done in a group, everybody wears the same hat at the same time.



White Hat thinking

This covers facts, figures, information needs and gaps. "I think we need some white hat thinking at this point..." means Let's drop the arguments and proposals, and look at the data base."



Red Hat thinking

This covers intuition, feelings and emotions. The red hat allows the thinker to put forward an intuition without any need to justify it. "Putting on my red hat, I think this is a terrible proposal." Usually feelings and intuition can only be introduced into a discussion if they are supported by logic. Usually the feeling is genuine but the logic is spurious. The red hat gives full permission to a thinker to put forward his or her feelings on the subject at the moment.



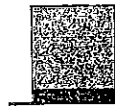
Black Hat thinking

This is the hat of judgment and caution. It is a most valuable hat. It is not in any sense an inferior or negative hat. The prior or negative hat. The black hat is used to point out why a suggestion does not fit the facts, the available experience, the system in use, or the policy that is being followed. The black hat must always be logical.



Yellow Hat thinking

This is the logical positive. Why something will work and why it will offer benefits. It can be used in looking forward to the results of some proposed action, but can also be used to find something of value in what has already happened.



Green Hat thinking

This is the hat of creativity, alternatives, proposals, what is interesting, provocations and changes.



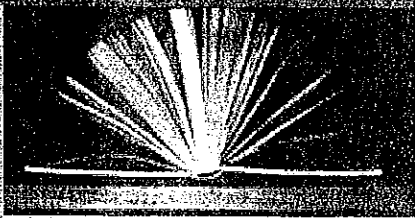
Blue Hat thinking

This is the overview or process control hat. It looks not at the subject itself but at the 'thinking' about the subject. "Putting on my blue hat, I feel we should do some more green hat thinking at this point." In technical terms, the blue hat is concerned with meta-cognition.

This was an excerpt from Edward de Bono's "Why Do Quality Efforts Lose Their Fizz?" Quality is No Longer Enough, The Journal for Quality and Participation, September 1991

This page supplied by Sylvie Labelle who can be contacted at syllab@videotron.ca

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ENGLISH

Learning Area

Twining Ideas and units - Teaching Strategies

Six Thinking Hats

Speaking and listening, reading, writing
Bands A+. B.C.D

What is it?

Six Thinking Hats is a strategy devised by Edward de Bono which requires students (and teachers), to extend their way of thinking about a topic by wearing a range of different 'thinking' hats:

White hat thinking focuses on the information available and needed.

Black hat thinking examines the difficulties and problems associated with a topic.

Yellow hat thinking focuses on benefits and values.

Red hat thinking looks at a topic from the point of view of emotions, feelings and hunches.

Green hat thinking requires imaginative, creative and lateral thinking about a topic.

Blue hat thinking focuses on reflection, metacognition (thinking about the thinking that is required), and the need to manage the thinking process.

The colours help students to visualise six separate modes of thinking and to convey something of the meaning of that thinking, for example, red as pertaining to matters of the heart, white as neutral and objective.

What is its purpose?

Students learn to reflect on their thinking and to recognise that different thinking is required in different learning situations.

How do I do it?

Consider an issue or topic which you would like your students to explore, for example, in Band C, the influence of JJJ on its listening audience, or, in Band A, the influence of a particular cartoon show on a young audience. Explain what thinking is required for each of the hats. Have students working in small groups to ask themselves a range of questions:

White hat - what are the facts about the radio station JJJ?

Black hat - what are some of the negatives about JJJ?

Yellow hat - what do people gain from listening to JJJ?

Red hat - how does listening to JJJ make us feel?

Green hat - what could be changed to make the station more accessible or more appealing?

Blue hat - how do the mass media in general affect our youth culture?

Groups report back to the whole class about the types of ideas generated using the six hats. The teacher points to the breadth of views and thoughts, and explains that this is as a result of making ourselves

apply a range of different types of 'thinking'.

How can I adapt it?

Six Hat Thinking can be applied to many situations in which brainstorming, problem solving, creative and lateral thinking are required. This strategy can be a very useful tool in reviewing a range of texts or even creating a character profile.

How can it be used to evaluate students' language learning?

There is a range of possible assessment outcomes in using Six Hat Thinking including:

- Understands and interprets the task
- Uses strategies to assist or facilitate discussion
- Contributes to discussion
- Comprehends and applies the six ways of thinking

Where can I get more information?

See the de Bono Institute for further information.

See also a summary of Six Hats Thinking.

Six Hats Thinking is also explained in many texts, including Edward de Bono's *Six Thinking Hats for Schools*.



The url for this page is <http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/sixhats.htm>

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You can use the Six Thinking Hats in almost any problem solving activity that you might encounter in the classroom (or in life in general!) Here is an example of a problem solving exercise that I went through with my students two years ago. Its a problem that many teachers will be able to relate to. What I've written below actually came out of the Six Hats problem solving process. The "Problemunity" that we examined was: w

Students Talking While Others Are Talking Or Teaching

Using the Six Hats allowed my class to look at the problem from different angles. Use 6 pieces of chart paper (and the 6 different colors of felt pens) as you apply each hat.

1. White Hat: state the facts
 - students are talking when Mrs Dyck is talking
 - there is noise so that others are distracted or can't hear
 - students don't know what to do after Mrs Dyck has given directions
 - many students get silly or off task
2. Red Hat: states the emotions
 - Mrs Dyck feels offended
 - Students are frustrated because they can't hear directions
 - Those talking enjoy joking around and being heard
3. Black Hat: negative aspects
 - time is wasted
 - learning is compromised
 - those who legitimately have the floor feel that listeners don't care about what they are saying
 - chaos in the classroom
4. Yellow Hat: positives of the situation are examined
 - everyone gets to say what is on their mind
 - it can be fun
 - you don't have to wait until you speak and therefore don't forget what you what to say
 - not just the "smart" kids get to speak
5. Green Hat: creative ideas that come with seeing the problem in a new light
 - Mrs Dyck will be more aware of the amount of time that she "talks"
 - Mrs Dyck will try to include interaction from many different students, not just the "smart" kids
 - students will work on resisting the need to say everything that comes into their mind. They will ask themselves if this is "on topic" and "if this needs to be shared at this time. There needed to be further discussion on "how" students would work on this problem.
 - students will think about whether their comment will interfere with other people's learning
 - we will keep these charts up so that we can refer back to the learning of this moment and reassess how we are doing.

6. Blue Hat: Sum up what is learned

- Mrs Dyck learned that she needs to limit the amount of time she uses "Talking" as a form of teaching
- Mrs Dyck needs to involve all students in discussion. She needs to look for the one who rarely offers comments or is quietly waiting to be picked to answer.
- Mrs Dyck needs to realize that some students need "think time" before they are ready to contribute to a discussion. Allowing time for these students to think is important part of class discussion so they don't tune out.
- students now realize that when they talk when others are talking it makes the person talking feel like a fool or unappreciated.
- students realize that just to "get the laugh" of the moment, they are jeopardizing other people's learning
- students learned that speaking whenever you want show a lack of self-discipline and that not everything that goes through our minds is worth sharing.
- teacher/student needs to revisit this topic and check how we are doing

When I did this exercise with my students I fully expected the process to show that "they" were at fault in this situation. It was humbling to hear them share that they sometimes called out because I didn't choose them to share their ideas or that I moved so fast they didn't get a chance to think. Students were blown away when I shared what I felt like when I had planned a long time for a particular lesson and then one silly comment "threw water" on my lesson- ruined it because the class got silly. They never viewed it as offending me and because we had a good relationship they were anxious to work on this problem. Because I cared about them I was willing to take some responsibility for the problem as well. Student/Teacher ownership added to the power of this exercise.

Some teachers may say this process takes too long. It would be better to "read the riot act" and move on. I have to say that it saved me piles of time in the long run. My class and I went through this process in November. Not only did their behavior improve but during the times they slipped, I would say "Remember the Six Hats...." and they go "Oh, yah..." and they'd click into the strategies that we established during the "Green/Blue" hat time. You have to realize that doing this exercise with students isn't stopping students from learning- it IS the learning.

My staff has used the Six Hats in staff meetings to problem solve. Really all it is is getting all viewpoints out on the table. I hope this explanation gives teachers a glimpse of how they might use it in their classroom.

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